DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 265 220 TM 860 087

AUTHOR Blackbourn, Joe M.; Wilkes, Sam T.
TITLE The Relationship of Teacher Morale and Zones of Indifference.
PUB DATE Nov 85
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association (14th, Biloxi, MS, November 6-8,1985).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Attitude Measures; Correlation; Elementary Secondary Education; Factor Structure; *Power Structure; Predictor Variables; Principals; Self Evaluation (Individuals); *Teacher Administrator Relationship; *Teacher Alienation; Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Morale; *Test Validity
IDENTIFIERS Authority; Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire; *Zones of Indifference (Behavior)

ABSTRACT

The relationship between teacher morale and teachers' acceptance of principals' authority was examined. The Zones of Indifference Instrument (ZII) was used to measure the degree of acceptance of authority. The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire (PTO) was also administered to the group of Mississippi teachers to measure their morale. Usable responses were obtained from 159 teachers. The two factors of the ZII, teacher determined practice and administrator determined policy, as well as total ZII score, were significantly correlated with three PTO factors: teacher rapport with principal, teacher salary, and teacher status. The PTO factor, curriculum issues, also correlated significantly with administrator determined policy. Teacher rapport with principal and teacher load accounted for considerable variance in teachers' attitudes toward the acceptance of authority. When the data from both tests were compared, low scores on the following factors were associated with a narrow zone of indifference and high rejection of the principals' authority: teacher-administrator rapport, teacher salary, teacher status, and curriculum issues. It was concluded that there was support for the concurrent validity of the Zones of Indifference Instrument. (GDC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

THE RELATIONSHIP OF TEACHER MORALE AND ZONES OF INDIFFERENCE

ED265220

By
Joe M. Blackbourn
Professor of Educational Leadership
Mississippi State University

and

Sam T. Wilkes
Professor of Educational Leadership
Mississippi State University

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. Blackbourn

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

A Research Paper Presented at the
1985 Annual Meeting of the Mid-South
Educational Research Association

Mississippi State University
Mississippi State, Mississippi 39762

TM 860 087

THE RELATIONSHIP OF TEACHER MORALE AND ZONES OF INDIFFERENCE

Statement of the Problem

The problem in this study was to determine the relationship between teachers and their zones of indifference as measured by the Zones of Indifference Instrument.

Rationale

Authority relationships in modern societal organizations are still practiced from the traditional viewpoint. Society delegates to the controlling institution the power to structure the needed institutions that exist to provide the services perceived as being needed by society. Through this structure authority positions are created in the organizations.

The public school system as a societal institution is strongly structured with authority positions. School boards, superintendents, and principals have all been well established as positions of authority from which communications in the form of directives are issued.

Compliance with these directives is supported due to the legitimacy of position; however, the legitimization of authority does not guarantee the degree of compliance expected by administrators of the organization.

Contrary to traditional concepts of authority, Chester Barnard described an acceptance theory of authority that results indiverse compliance behavior. As defined by Barnard, authority

> "...is the character of a communication (order) in a formal organization by virtue of which it is accepted by a contributor to or 'member' of the organization as governing the action he contributes; that is, as governing or determining what he does or is not to do so far as the organization is concerned... Therefore under this definition the decision as to whether an order has authority or not lies with the person to whom it is addressed, and does not reside in 'persons of authority' or those who issue those orders."[1]

---

[1] Chester I. Barnard, The Functions of the Executive (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1948), p. 163.

In the explanation of and to facilitate the acceptance theory of authority, Barnard introduced the concept "zones of indifference," which describes the extent to which people will respond to orders or directives issued by authority figures. This concept suggests that some orders are clearly unacceptable, while some would be somewhat neutral, and others would be unquestionably acceptable. With regard to this concept it is further suggested that this "zone of indifference" will be wider or narrower with different individuals within the organization. This concept suggests that the difference in the zone size is created by the degree to which the inducements exceed the consequences which determines the individual's adhesion to the organization.[2]

Other researchers have investigated the concept of the "zone of indifference," but from a positive frame of reference. Fiedler,[3] Simon,[4] and Kunz[5] utilized this concept in writing and research but in doing so used the term "zone of acceptance" to avoid a negative connotation.

These earlier writings occurred during periods when administrator-teacher relationships may have been more positive. Within the past ten years, evidence of teacher militancy, negotiations, teacher strikes, and teachers leaving the teaching profession indicate that present administrator-teacher relationships have grown more to an adversary situation. It is apparent that present relationships could indicate a negative environment.

---

[2]Ibid, p. 169

[3]Fred E. Fiedler, A Theory of Leadership Effectiveness (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1967).

[4]Herbert Simon, Administrative Behavior (New York: The Free Press, 1968).

[5]Daniel Walter Kunz, "Leader Behavior of Principals and the Professional Zone of Acceptance of Teachers." Unpublished Ed.D Dissertation, School of Education, Rutgers University, 1973).

In the present milieu, teachers do not hesitate to question the authority of school administrators. This study is an attempt to determine what relationships exist between teacher morale and the acceptance of authority.

Procedure

The Instruments, the Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire and the Zones of Indifference Instrument, were administered to 200 teachers in five selected schools in a large school system in Mississippi in the spring of 1984. One hundred fifty-nine usable responses were returned. This was a return rate of eighty percent.

The PTO was used to measure the morale of teachers, while the ZII was used to measure teacher's acceptance of directives issued by their principals.

The Data were analyzed using stepwise multiple regression.

Findings

The simple correlations between the two sub-scales of the ZII and the ten sub-scales of the PTO are presented in Table 1. An examination of the data indicated that eleven of the thirty correlation coefficients were significant at the .05 level.

Factors 1, Teacher Rapport with Principal, 4, Teacher Salary, and 7, Teacher Status of the PTO, correlated significantly with Zones 1, Teacher Determined Practice, Zone 2, Administrator Determined Policy, and total score of the ZII. Factor 6, Curriculum Issues, of the PTO correlated significantly with Zone 2, Administrator Determined Policy and with the total score of the ZII.

TABLE 1

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN ZONES OF INDIFFERENCE AND TEACHER MORALE AS MEASURED BY THE PURDUE TEACHER OPINIONNAIRE

PREDICTORS	TEACHER DETERMINED PRACTICE ZONE 1 r	ADMINISTRATOR DETERMINED POLICY ZONE 2 r - x	TOTAL r
Factor 1: Rapport with Principal.	-.21*	-.35*	-.30*
Factor 2: Satisfaction with Teaching.	-.09	-.16	-.13
Factor 3: Rapport among Teachers.	.01	-.07	-.03
Factor 4: Teacher Salary.	-.19*	-.19*	-.20*
Factor 5: Teacher Load.	.01	-.09	-.04
Factor 6: Curriculum Issues.	-.12	-.24*	-.19*
Factor 7: Teacher Status.	-.20*	-.23*	-.23*
Factor 8: Community Support of Education.	-.07	-.11	-.10
Factor 9: School Facilities and Services.	-.08	-.17	-.14
Factor 10: Community Pressures.	-.09	-.13	-.12

* $r \geq .19$ (Significant at .05 level).

The data presented in Table 2 indicate the relationship between teachers' self-reported morale as measured by the PTO and their self-reported attitudes toward teacher determined practice as measured by the ZII. As shown in Table 2, three factors of the PTO, Factor 1, Teacher Rapport With Principal, Factor 5, Teacher Load, and Factor 7, Teacher Status, accounted for twelve percent of the variance in acceptance of authority. When the rest of the subscales of the PTO were considered, they accounted for an additional four percent of the variance.

The data presented in Table 3 indicate the relationship between teachers' self-reported morale as measured by the PTO and their self-reported attitudes toward Administrator Determined Policy as measured by the ZII. As shown in Table 3, two factors of the PTO, Factor 1, Teacher Rapport With Principal, and Factor 5, Teacher Load, accounted for fourteen percent of the variance in acceptance of authority. When the rest of the sub-scales of the PTO were considered, an additional six percent of the variance was explored.

The data presented in Table 4 indicate the relationship between teachers self-reported attitudes toward authority as measured by the ZII and teachers morale as measured by the PTO.

As the data in Table 4 indicate, Factor 1, Teacher Rapport With Principal, and Factor 5, Teacher Load, accounted for twelve percent of the variance in teacher attitudes toward the acceptance of authority. When all predictors were considered, they accounted for nineteen percent of the variance.

TABLE 2

PREDICTING ATTITUDES TOWARD THE TEACHER DETERMINED SUB-SCALE OF THE ZONES OF INDIFFERENCE INSTRUMENT THROUGH USE OF THE PURDUE TEACHER OPINIONNAIRE SCORES

PREDICTORS	MULTIPLE R	R^2	R^2 ADDED	F
Factor 1: Rapport with Principal.	.21	.04	.04	6.95 *
Factor 5: Teacher Load.	.28	.0854	.03	5.57 *
Factor 7: Teacher Status.	.32	.1010	.03	4.41 *
Factor 3: Rapport among Teachers.	.35	.1200	.02	3.32
Factor 4: Teacher Salary.	.37	.1371	.02	3.04
Factor 10: Community Pressures.	.38	.15	.01	1.48
Factor 2: Satisfaction with Teaching.	.39	.15	.00	.78
Factor 8: Community Support of Education.	.39	.16	.01	.95
Factor 6: Curriculum Issues.	.40	.16	.00	.38
Factor 9: School Facilities & Services.	.40	.16	.00	.65

* $F \geq 3.86$ (Significant at .05 level).

TABLE 3

PREDICTING ATTITUDES TOWARD THE ADMINISTRATION DETERMINED POLICY SUB-SCALE OF THE ZONES OF INDIFFERENCE INSTRUMENT THROUGH USE OF THE PURDUE TEACHER OPINIONNAIRE SCORES

PREDICTORS	MULTIPLE R	R^2	CHANGE IN R^2	TOTAL
Factor 1: Rapport with Principal.	.35	.12	.12	21.54 *
Factor 5: Teacher Load.	.38	.14	.02	4.35 *
Factor 3: Rapport among Teachers.	.39	.15	.01	1.70
Factor 6: Curriculum Issues	.41	.17	.02	3.30
Factor 7: Teacher Status.	.42	.18	.01	1.25
Factor 8: Community Support of Education.	.43	.18	.01	.98
Factor 2: Satisfaction with Teaching.	.43	.19	.00	.69
Factor 4: Teacher Salary.	.44	.19	.00	.74
Factor 9: School Facilities and Services.	.44	.19	.00	.69
Factor 10: Community Pressures.	.44	.20	.00	.30

* $F \geq 3.86$ (Significant at .05 level).

TABLE 4

PREDICTING OVERALL ATTITUDES TOWARD THE ZONES OF INDIFFERENCE THROUGH USE OF THE PURUDE TEACHER OPINIONNAIRE

PREDICTORS	MULTIPLE R	R^2	R^2 CHARGE	Fto ENTER
Factor 1: Rapport with Principal.	.30	.09	.09	14.98 *
Factor 5: Teacher Load.	.34	.12	.03	5.38 *
Factor 7: Teacher Status.	.36	.13	.01	2.48
Factor 3: Rapport among Teachers.	.39	.15	.02	3.20
Factor 6: Curriculum Issues.	.40	.16	.01	1.90
Factor 4: Teacher Salary.	.41	.17	.01	1.30
Factor 9: School Facilities & Services.	.42	.17	.01	1.10
Factor 2: Satisfaction with Teaching.	.42	.18	.00	.84
Factor 8: Community Support of Education.	.43	.18	.01	.95
Factor 10: Community Pressures.	.43	.19	.00	.64

$F \geq 3.86$ (Significant at .05 level).

Summary

When the data from the PTO and the ZII were compared, it was found that when factor 1, Teacher rapport with principal, was low, the reported scores on both sub-scales and the total score on the ZII were high. This indicated a narrow zone of indifference and high rejection of the authority of the principal.

The same was true when comparing the Teacher Salary sub-scale of the PTO with both sub-scale and total score of the ZII. When scores were low on the Teacher Salary sub-scale of the PTO, they were high on both sub-scales and the total score of the ZII. This indicated a narrow zone of indifference and high rejection of the authority of the principal.

When scores were low on the Teacher Status sub-scale of the PTO, they were high on both sub-scales and the total score of the ZII. This also indicated a narrow zone of indifference and high rejection of the authority of the principal.

When scores were low on the curriculum issues sub-scale of the PTO, they were high on sub-scale two of the ZII. This indicated a narrow zone of indifference and high rejection of the authority of the principal.

Not only do these data explain the phenomenon examined in the present study, but they also provide a measure of concurrent validity of the Zones of Indifference Instrument.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barnard, Chester I. The Functions of the Executive (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1948), p. 163.

Fiedler, Fred E., A Theory of Leadership Effectiveness (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1967).

Kunz, Daniel Walter. "Leader Behavior of Principals and the Professional Zone of Acceptance of Teachers." Unpublished Ed.D dissertation, School of Education, Rutgers University, 1973.

Simon, Herbert. Administrative Behavior. (New York: The Free Press, 1968.)